Rome, March 6. 1879.

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Dear Mr. Garrison

for yourself
and the members
of your
family and
believe me
ever
sincerely
your friend
E. Lewis

Yesterday I accompanied a friend who had been invited to attend the funeral of William Howitt, and as I thought much of you, with the feeling that you would have been gratified to be there, this must be my excuse for writing. The services were held in the little chapel inside the Protestant Cemetary, and were simply the reading of the Scriptures by the American clergyman, Dr. Nevin, who then led the way to the newly opened grave on the hillside, where the grass was green, and the little birds singing in the trees, and the sun shining in the gorgeous splendour of an early Spring afternoon in Rome. All there gathered around while the clergyman made a few ~~explanatory~~ remarks explanatory of his omission of the usual form of the Episcopal burial service, and of the peculiar belief of Mr. Howitt, ending with a most fitting and touching tribute to his memory given in a voice often broken by emotion. He spoke of the goings out and in of this gentle man among this people, and of the blameless life which might well be a rebuke to the many whose professions of faith were greater and whose practical love and charity so infinitely less. The coffin was then lowered, and after the words "earth to earth" the daughter, Mrs. Watts, and her husband strewed a profusion of roses and fresh flowers upon it, others friends dropped their offerings, and then the little group scattered — many of them to linger around in the warm sunshine and read upon the tombstones the names of those who had found their last resting place in a foreign land. On the stone above Keats' grave is the well known line, "Here lies one whose name is writ in water". I copied the verse beneath the bust near by:

"Keats! If thy cherished name be writ in water,
Each drop has fallen from some mourner's cheek —
A sacred tribute such as heroes seek
Though oft in vain, for deeds of slaughter.
Sleep on — not honored less for epitaph so meek."

We are enjoying Rome exceedingly, and particularly our walks over the quiet hillsides where, if the old ruins are not sufficiently suggestive of past ages, one has only to enter one of the many churches, where the monks - the straggling remnants of some once powerful order - are chanting their monotonous devotions, or kneeling in picturesque groups upon the stone floor. One of them always takes the visitor in charge, and exhibits the treasures kept under lock and key - usually the bones of some saint or martyr. In one church is shown a little wooden baby, said to be carved by a monk in Jerusalem, of the wood from the garden of olives. This baby possesses miraculous powers of healing, and is sent for, often three or four times daily, to be laid upon the bed of in cases of illness. The rich send for it in great state, and the Prince of Torlonia has a carriage and servants at the disposal of the poor, who otherwise could not hope for its visits. It is covered with jewels, many of them of great value - the votive offerings of those who have been helped. I think you would come to Italy if you knew how much the english language is spoken everywhere here. We notice a great change in this respect, and sometimes almost forget that we are amongst a people whose tongue is not the same as our own. Here in this hotel (the Quirinal) the guests are, with few exceptions, english or Americans, and the large pleasant reading rooms are filled in the evening with people chatting to each other and telling over the days experiences. We meet many whom we have met before in our travels, and it takes but little to establish acquaintanceships when in a foreign country. We have many times hoped we might see Mrs. Villard and her family this side the water. We were indebted to them before for a good deal of the pleasure of a former trip. We hope they are well, as also your other sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters. Wendell most kindly sent us a letter to his friends, Mr. & Mrs. Stillman, in Florence, with whom we exchanged visits several times, and always with increased liking. They have beautiful children, and the last - a fine little fellow - is the special pride of his father. Mrs. Stillman I heard described by a friend who had met her in society there, as the most beautiful woman in Florence. We make no plans beyond the going to Naples in about a month from now. So far we are blessed with good health, and just now with good weather, though for the most part our experience of the last few months has been such as to make us boast of the rigors and the splendours of a downright New-England winter. It is wonderfully preferable to the dreary skies and almost constantly falling rain of this warmer climate. Please accept from Mr. Lewis and myself the assurance of our continued respect and affection

MS. A.1.2 V.40 P.86(b)